

# EMBASSY THEATRE

## "THE DAY OF GLORY"

By H. E. BATES

Mr. Bates has two themes. One is the eternal hope that each new wasteful war is at last the war to end war. The other is the fear which brave men must pretend that they do not feel.

He uses these themes to describe the effect of two wars on three generations of a single family. Two at least of these generations are made of heroic stuff, and the third, a small girl, is at the hero-worshipping stage. The colonel who was wounded in the head at Loos, and decorated, is half crazy; his nephew, a distinguished fighter pilot, has begun to see that flying isn't fun and to be taught by the fear that haunts him in the air that he is about to give his life for the same high purpose for which his uncle a quarter of a century before gave his reason. There is a woman who understands what is happening to him; there is another woman who sees him simply as a hero of the newspapers; and there is his mother, who must endure his loss as a mother.

It is the well-known short story writer's first play. The plot and the dialogue are alike handled with remarkable skill, and the general effect is impressive. But why, we wonder all the while, is such a moving story told with so much accomplishment not a great deal more moving? Mr. Bates impresses the imagination without warming it: the characters do and say the effective things, but they never quite win the degree of sympathy which their situation seemingly warrants, they lack spontaneity and the discoveries they make about themselves and each other have a dulling air of platitude. Had the play been performed when it was written, during the war, it might have had that instancy and freshness which are now to seek: we should have responded differently to the self-analysis of heroes and naturally overlooked the narrative strings and pulleys which are now all too plain, for all the neatness with which they are arranged.

It must be said that the company do not appear to share our sense of inhibition. Mr. Roderick Lovell and Mr. Raymond Huntley both give edge and acuity to the psychological studies of the heroes; Miss Mary Morris makes a fine thing of the girl whose understanding sympathy might so easily become unbearable; and Miss Gwynne Whitby is admirable as the mother whose stiff-backed upbringing has not impaired her sensitiveness. It is a good play which we are always wishing a little better.